

## SENATE JOINT RESOLUTION 698

By Tracy

A RESOLUTION to recognize Mr. Steve Benefield on the occasion of his retirement as President of the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce.

WHEREAS, it is appropriate that the members of this legislative body should honor those citizens who have performed with uncommon devotion and enthusiasm throughout their years of industry and public service and have dedicated their efforts to improving the quality of life and the environment for their fellow citizens; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Steve Benefield is one such estimable person who has served with distinction for ten years as President of the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce; and

WHEREAS, born and raised in Columbia, Tennessee, Mr. Benefield graduated from Columbia Central High School before attending Middle Tennessee State University (MTSU) on a baseball scholarship, and earning a Bachelor of Administration degree in finance and a minor in business administration; and

WHEREAS, after graduating from college, Steve Benefield returned to his hometown of Columbia and began his foray into local government, working for the South Central Tennessee Development District as the economic development specialist, where he helped local and county governments and chambers of commerce in assisting industrial and commercial entities expand current operations or locate new facilities; he also helped local governments acquire funding; and

WHEREAS, in 1995, Mr. Benefield attained his first executive chamber of commerce position as the Executive Vice-President of the Morristown Area Chamber of Commerce; and

WHEREAS, in this prominent position, Steve Benefield was responsible for the administration of all chamber of commerce activities and spearheaded the Industrial Development program; it was during his astute leadership that the Morristown and Hamblen County areas enjoyed tremendous growth, ranking Morristown sixth among industrial cities in Tennessee with over 15,000 manufacturing jobs; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Benefield has rendered sterling service as the President and Chief Executive Officer of the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce since 1998 with acumen and alacrity; and

WHEREAS, under his tireless leadership, the chamber has grown to boast a membership of more than 2,000 members, making it Tennessee's third largest chamber of commerce; the chamber is also known for its building that is purported to be the nicest and most practical facility of its kind in Tennessee; and

WHEREAS, in his esteemed position, Steve Benefield has been responsible for overall operations of the organization, specifically advising a board of eighteen members on issues facing the business community and the greater Rutherford County community; and

WHEREAS, some of his most successful projects have been securing the hotel and conference center in Rutherford County and making the county the sporting event destination of the state; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Benefield began his much deserved retirement in January of 2008 and was honored with a banquet to pay tribute to his peerless service with the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce; and

WHEREAS, Steve Benefield's outstanding success as a public servant and civic leader is directly attributable to his reliance on the time-honored values of hard work and common sense and an uncommon ability to work well with people of all walks of life; and

WHEREAS, Mr. Benefield is an active and important part of his community and his profession, participating in numerous worthy organizations, including the Tennessee Chamber of Commerce Executives and the American Chamber of Commerce Executives, and lending his support to the Tennessee Industrial Development Council and American Economic Development Council; and

WHEREAS, Steve Benefield is a superb individual who epitomizes the ideal of the consummate professional, dedicated public servant, and reliable friend and neighbor of Rutherford County; and

WHEREAS, his many accomplishments aside, Mr. Benefield is most appreciative of the love and support he receives from his wife, Tracyann J. Benefield, and his two sons, Blake and Andrew; and

WHEREAS, Steve Benefield exemplifies the spirit and allegiance to family and community that are characteristic of a true Tennessean; and

WHEREAS, throughout his estimable career, Mr. Steve Benefield has demonstrated the utmost professionalism, ability, and integrity, winning the unbridled respect and admiration of his colleagues; now, therefore,

BE IT RESOLVED BY THE SENATE OF THE ONE HUNDRED FIFTH GENERAL ASSEMBLY OF THE STATE OF TENNESSEE, THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES CONCURRING, that we extend to Mr. Steve Benefield our heartfelt wishes for a happy and fulfilling retirement as President of the Rutherford County Chamber of Commerce and every continued success at Mid-South Bus Center and all future endeavors.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED, that an appropriate copy of this resolution be prepared for presentation with this final clause omitted from such copy.